Building Understanding through Collaborative Conversation Patterns

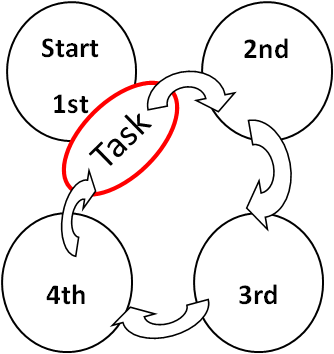
Teachers use conversation patterns guide students in the exchange, reflection on, and building of ideas. ***The structured process for conducting a collaborative conversation enables learners to focus on listening, exchanging ideas, and learning.***

**Conversation Tools: Domino Share, Rounds, and Roles**



**Domino Share**

Domino Share is a process for sharing ideas similar to dominos falling in a row. Each person says only what is required of the task and the process flows one person after another without any interruptions. A “domino share” includes everyone’s initial thoughts and offers each person equal time to talk. Domino Share is useful when gathering ideas from small groups or the whole class. Domino Share helps students in small groups to engage everyone in the group’s conversation.



Example Two: Talk, Think, Build

Example One: CRED

**Roles**

Roles happen when a group needs to divide a large task or goal into different parts to accomplish a goal. In an effort to be efficient, each person takes on a different role to complete a part of a larger whole. Each role provides an essential part for successful completion of the whole task.

**Rounds**

Rounds are the process where everyone completes the same task one after another around the circle in a small group. If students are familiar with the Domino Share – then you can ask them to complete a task in rounds using the Domino Share method.

***Use CRED to Practice Building Arguments***

**Process**

1. Form groups of four. Determine roles for building the first argument.
2. Begin building an argument by saying out loud task associated with your role. Repeat what the person before you said and add your role.
3. Build four different arguments. Rotate roles with each argument.
4. Rate the four arguments. \* *Star = most credible argument,   
   🗸 check = arguments that represent different viewpoints,   
   + Plus = most accurate interpretation of the source*

* Consider beginning with evidence or with claim.

**A stands for claim**. This is a claim that could be made based on evidence from a text, document, or situation:

* “Homework should be banned.”
* “Poverty is harmful.”
* “The United Nations should be re-formed.”

*A claim itself is not an argument. It has no support, and so, by itself, it’s basically nothing other than a baseless claim.*

C

**R stands for reasoning**. Adding reasoning is essential to making arguments. *The reasoning part of an argument is the “because” part of the argument:*

* “Homework should be banned because it interferes with effective learning.”
* “Poverty is harmful because when families are poor, they cannot regularly feed their children.”
* “The United Nations should be reformed because it is not effective now.”

*Reasoning connects the claim to the evidence.*

R

**E stands for evidence**. *Evidence provides proof of your reasoning*. Themost common type of evidence is the example. For the arguments we’ve been looking at, we might say the following:

* “Homework should be banned because it interferes with effective learning. For example, students have to stay up late to finish their homework, and this makes them tired in class so they can’t pay attention.”
* “Poverty is harmful because when families are poor, they cannot regularly feed their children. For example, often poor families have to choose between paying their rent and buying food.”
* “The United Nations should be reformed because it is not effective now. For example, the U.N. is so disorganized that it can’t conduct effective peacekeeping operations, like the operation in Rwanda that failed because there weren’t enough troops and so may people died.”

E

**D stands for documenter.** The documenter records the argument with all of its parts, the assertion, the reason, and the evidence.

D

**Build Arguments through CRED**

Note documenter records the claim, reason, and evidence. Each person repeats what the previous person said and adds their role to the argument. After completing at least four arguments then the group rates the arguments.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Claim** | **Reason** | **Evidence** | **Rating**  \* *Star = most credible argument,  🗸 Check = arguments that represent different viewpoints,  + Plus = most accurate interpretation of the source* |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**Talk, Think, Open Exchange & Build** (A Variation of the Microlab Protocol)

**Roles: Speaker** – completes a task such as answering a question or sharing work or an idea.

**Listeners** – focus their attention on the speaker, make sure to physically hear, seek to understand what the speaker is saying, do not think about how to respond, and listen with a positive outlook to what is being shared.

**Time Keeper** – can be the teacher or one person for the entire group or one of the listeners in each group can also be a time keeper. It is useful to set a timer so that no one has to watch a clock.

***Note:*** *Whenever a participant’s task is* ***to listen*** *then the participant* ***cannot talk****.*

**Get Ready**

1. Form groups of three.
2. Determine roles. Everyone will complete each role, so determine who will be the speaker first.
3. The person going first as the speaker points to the person who will be the second speaker – so we know how sharing will move from one person to the next.

**Steps:**

* 1. **Share:** Speaker: describes a question, dilemma, or resonating ideas. Listeners: Two other participants listen without interrupting. No one but the speaker talks during this time period. If the speaker finishes before the time is up then the group remains silent and uses the extra time to think.
  2. **Think:** Everyone takes time to think about what they heard. During think time participants may jot down questions, record connections, patterns, and surprises, and take notes.
  3. **Question:** Two listeners ask clarifying questions to better understand what they heard. Speaker answers the questions. All refrain from evaluating or commenting, instead questions to gain understanding are posed and answered.
  4. **Think:** Everyone is silent and thinks.
  5. **Repeat steps 1 – 4** (changing roles so that everyone has a chance to be the Speaker)
  6. **Open Exchange & Build** – talk together to exchange ideas about what has been learned from each other and this process. Consider questions or puzzles that came up and talk about patterns that emerged.
  7. **Debrief the conversation process:**
* How did this go for you? What worked well (pluses), and what was difficult (minuses)? Why?
* How might your conversations have been different without the structure?
* What would we want to keep in mind for next time? List ***pluses*** – things that we should ***keep doing*** and ***wishes*** – things that we might ***start doing***.

**Variations**

This process can easily be varied to serve different learning needs. For example, if the speaker needs feedback on the work or ideas that were shared then change steps 3 Question and step 4 Think to step 3 Exchange and step 4 Interesting and Useful.

1. **Exchange:** *Speaker is not allowed to speak during this step.* It is often useful to move chair back a bit, but to stay close enough to listen. The two listeners will have an exchange about what they heard raising questions, making connections, noting surprises and patterns. It is helpful for the two listeners to look at each other, avoiding eye contact with the Speaker.
2. **Interesting & Useful:** Speaker shares what was interesting and useful from the exchange. Listeners listen to the Speaker.

This structure is based on the Micro Lab Protocol from the National School Reform web site. <http://www.nsrfharmony.org/protocol/doc/microlabs.pdf>